

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be able to complete my remarks prior to the vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, last week, President Biden's Chief of Staff retweeted a tweet from Harvard economist Jason Furman describing our current economic challenges—notably, the growing inflation crisis and supply chain issues—as “high class problems.”

“High class problems.”

Well, I guess working Americans struggling to stretch their paychecks to cover increases in the price of everything from groceries to gas can comfort themselves with the knowledge that they are experiencing “high class problems.”

The White House Chief of Staff's tone-deaf tweet was, unfortunately, pretty typical of a White House that seems eager to minimize or disclaim responsibility for most of the problems occurring on its watch, whether it is the flood of illegal immigration across our southern border or the high prices Americans are currently facing.

But as the White House Chief of Staff and the President should know, inflation has become a serious problem for working Americans. Inflation, of course, hits middle- and low-income families hard.

If you are wealthy, price increases may be an annoyance, but they are not likely to break the budget. If you are living paycheck to paycheck, on the other hand, price increases may mean the difference between making it to the next paycheck or running out of money mid-month.

Currently, inflation is costing a typical household \$175 a month, and that is according to Moody's Analytics. That may not sound like much to a wealthy Democratic politician, but for an ordinary American family, it is a lot of money.

That \$175 a month may be the difference between whether or not parents can afford to get braces for their daughter. It may be the difference between going to visit family for Christmas or staying home and not seeing them. It may be the difference between having money for the extras, like family dinners at a restaurant or little league fees or ballet lessons or just being able to cover the bare necessities.

For families making less than the median U.S. income, \$100 or more a month can be the difference between making it to the next paycheck or running out of money. It can mean the dif-

ference between paying the heating bill or going cold during the winter.

Americans have seen increases in food prices and the price of bacon or beef or poultry, pork, peanut butter, fruits and vegetables, eggs, and the list goes on. The price of children's shoes is up. So is the price of furniture and gas and electricity and rent.

A recent AP article entitled “Winter heating bills set to jump as inflation hits home” noted “the U.S. Government said . . . it expects households to see their heating bills jump as much as 54 percent compared to last winter.”

Fifty-four percent.

Show me the working family that can easily absorb that increase. Inflation happens when you have too much money, too many dollars chasing too few of goods.

Democrats helped trigger our inflation situation earlier this year when they decided to pour a lot of unnecessary government money into the economy, despite being warned their partisan \$1.9 trillion spending bill could stoke inflation.

Now, with inflation clearly becoming a long-term problem, Democrats are preparing to double down on the government spending with a massive \$3.5 trillion tax-and-spending bill filled with priorities like \$200 million for a park in Speaker PELOSI's district—a park that features luxury housing and a golf course—and billions of dollars for a Civilian Climate Corps to provide government jobs for climate activists.

The massive government spending this bill—the biggest expansion of government, for sure, in decades, maybe in history—would authorize would pretty much guarantee that our country would be left with an even more persistent and widespread inflation problem.

Flooding the economy with government dollars isn't even the only way that the bill will contribute to inflation. The bill also contains big tax hikes on businesses, which are already raising prices thanks to the higher cost of shipping and materials and the challenges of hiring an adequate workforce. Raising taxes on those businesses could result in even higher consumer prices and/or reductions in the quality of services provided to consumers.

Government revenue for fiscal year 2021 saw a huge increase, driven in large part by tax receipts from corporations and well-off Americans. Those are the same companies and individuals the Democrats like to accuse of not paying their fair share.

But since Democrats' appetite for government spending is apparently insatiable, record-high government revenues don't look likely to stop them from passing their huge tax increases and driving up prices for consumers further.

Along with the flood of government spending Democrats passed in the spring, another major contributor to our inflation crisis has been supply chain bottlenecks. The White House

has largely failed to do anything to address the problem.

The President finally took one step forward when he announced the other day that the Port of Los Angeles will join the Port of Long Beach in operating 24/7.

Well, it is about time. Major ports around the globe already operate around the clock, but here in the United States, unions have largely stood in the way of round-the-clock operations. And even now, the Port of Los Angeles/Long Beach will not be fully 24/7 for a while. Only one of the container terminals is currently open around the clock, and then only for part of the week. The others are only slowly moving toward 24-hour operations with no deadline in sight.

Other than moving toward 24/7 operations in Los Angeles, however, the President is doing almost nothing to address the supply chain bottleneck. Infrastructure upgrades for ports, trucking, and rail are stuck in limbo while Democrats debate their \$3.5 trillion tax-and-spending spree.

And, while the President's Transportation Secretary has talked about loosening trucking regulations, his Department is actually pursuing an aggressive regulatory agenda that is likely to make transporting goods around this country more, not less, difficult.

And I don't even want to think about the transportation challenges that are likely to result from the government mandates and regulations that will emerge from the Democrats' \$3.5 trillion tax-and-spending spree.

It is unfortunate that Democrat elites cannot seem to grasp that inflation is a serious problem for working families and that the solution to our inflation problem is not to flood our economy with even more government money. If Democrats succeed in passing their reckless tax-and-spending spree, high inflation may be the order of the day for many, many days to come.

Let's hope that Democrats think better of their spending plans before American families end up paying the price.

I yield the floor.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 414, Catherine Elizabeth Lhamon, of California, to be Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Department of Education.

Charles E. Schumer, Mazie Hirono, Tammy Duckworth, Martin Heinrich, Christopher A. Coons, Jack Reed, Benjamin L. Cardin, Angus S. King, Jr., Alex Padilla, Jeff Merkley, Christopher Murphy, Sheldon Whitehouse, Tina